Characters

- Lucie-Marie
- Annie-Sharon
- Tie-Down Brown
- Cassie

Scene 1

(*The scene opens with the two girls*, LUCIE-MARIE *and* ANNIE-SHARON, *practicing rope tricks and tie-down roping in their bedroom, which is decorated with rodeo and riding paraphernalia. There are lots of portraits of their mother in riding gear and rows of trophy belts that she won covering the walls. There is a large bed, a window and a saddle on a sawhorse. The doorway opens to a stairway which leads to the kitchen which is also a living room. It should be adequate but a little worn*.)

LUCIE-MARIE

Ain't that the way to do it?

ANNIE-SHARON

Well, I taught you, so you oughtta know whatchu doin' by now. . .

LUCIE-MARIE

Mama showed you everythin' you think you know/ & every single thin' you call yo'self teachin' me/ so there. . .

ANNIE-SHARON

You know I don' like discussin' Mama/ so cut it out, ya hear me. This bein' the day she died and all. . .

LUCIE-MARIE

By the time she was yo' age, she was awready a champion

(*Pronounced "champeen."*).

Whatchu call yo'self, since ya learnt how to walk, talk, crawl 'n' rope all single-handed like/ a new born heifer or somethin'?

ANNIE-SHARON

I call myself me, okay? 'Sides I am a champion.

LUCIE-MARIE

Naw ya ain't. Yajus' won some first prizes/ bein' a champion means ya win everythin' there is to win/ more 'n' a few times/ likes season after season & year after year/ like Mama/ Twanda Rochelle Johnson/ that's my mama's name.

ANNIE-SHARON

Waz yo' mama's name.

LUCIE-MARIE

Yeah. You right abt Mama.

(*Shifts mood.*)

Ya know what Lincoln Maceo tol' me?

ANNIE-SHARON

Nope.

LUCIE-MARIE

He say that it gets up in there/ and ya getta baby.

ANNIE-SHARON

No lie.

LUCIE-SHARON

But if it's wiggly & squigly lookin'. . .like Mavis' li'l boy. . .

ANNIE-SHARON

Uh humhph. All cushy and curled up. . .

LUCIE-MARIE

Well, how could it get up anywhere?

ANNIE-SHARON

Mother Dear say it don't matter how/ it ain't s'posed to git nowhere/ sides where all it gonna go/ or are you fixin' to let me in on that?

LUCIE-MARIE

Up in here somewhere.

(*Feeling her tummy.*)

ANNIE-SHARON

Girl, it cain't possibly get all up in there.

LUCIE-MARIE

Yeah it do.

(*She gets up & they start to measure the lengths of rope against the inches from their pelvis' to their navels.*)

See heah. . .Now look at that.

(*Sees it's shorter.*)

ANNIE-SHARON

See, it'd have to be this big.

LUCIE-MARIE

That cain't be. Don't nobody want nothin' that big up in there!

ANNIE-SHARON

Well, I don' get how that's gonna happen. We jus' said whatever them li'l dicks is they still li'l ol' squigly wiggly things.

LUCIE-MARIE

Look like covered up snakes.

(*Laughing.*)

ANNIE-SHARON

But they's all kinda snakes.

LUCIE-MARIE

Like Diamondbacks, right?

ANNIE-SHARON

Ya leave him outta this, heah. He don' talk to me 'bout stuff like this.

LUCIE-MARIE

May be ya oughtta ask him/ he might know how ya git it up in there.

ANNIE-SHARON

Mavis' boy/ what's that boy's name?

LUCIE-MARIE

Duke.

ANNIE-SHARON

He don' look like Duke to me. Looks mo' like a Sam to me.

LUCIE-MARIE

Don' say nothin' like that to Mavis. She think that li'l niggah is the Lord hisself crawlin' round in them ol' stink diapers.

ANNIE-SHARON

Daddy look like that.

LUCIE-MARIE

Like what?

ANNIE-SHARON

Ya know, all curled up & then all peein' in yo' face when it's stood up like when they pants' down.

LUCIE-MARIE

How cd you say somethin' like that/ ya know Daddy don' pee in his pants!

ANNIE-SHARON

Well, now he don't.

LUCIE-MARIE

I think he's all hot in his pants for that Cassie what barrel-races.

ANNIE-SHARON

Who her? That one over to the Madisonville Rodeo last month?

LUCIE-MARIE

Yeah, that the one.

ANNIE-SHARON

Humm. Ya think when Daddy gets hot in his pants/ it's like when I'm dancin' wit Diamondback and he squeezes me real hard and we git real close up on each other over at the Trailblazers/ & my drawers git all wet 'n' sticky?

LUCIE-MARIE

Naw. It ain't the same at all. 'Member when Mother Dear tol' us. It was all our own business & ours all by our own selfs/ if we got all hot 'n' bothered.

ANNIE-SHARON

Yeah.

LUCIE-MARIE

Well, Daddy's a boy/ a man/ ya know what I mean/ so it cain't be the same wit him as wit us/ cuz we girls.

ANNIE-SHARON

I ain't sho'.

LUCIE-MARIE

We cd ask him.

ANNIE-SHARON

Ya know he don' truck wit all that "personal" talk/ our butts be the onliest thing hot/ we come burnin' his ears/ talkin' bout boys 'n' kissin'/ mess like that.

LUCIE-MARIE

But Mama wda tol' us, huh? Whatchu think?

ANNIE-SHARON

Whatchu mean? Don' talk bout Mama. I don' wanna talk bout her. See you jus' cain't remember the way I do.

LUCIE-MARIE

But Annie-Sharon. . .

ANNIE-SHARON

I don' wanna talk bout her.

(*Goes over to the wall where there are all kinds of prize winning buckles from rodeo races.*)

Ya think she rides wit us when we race?

(*Takes one belt down & wraps it around herself.*)

LUCIE-MARIE

Ya know Daddy don't like talk like that/ he say "let the dead rest" he say.

ANNIE-SHARON

I know what "he say"/ I don' know what make me think somethin' simpleminded like that.

LUCIE-MARIE

Tryin' to act like ya don' miss Mama & gittin' all riled up every which time I even call her name is what ya git talkin' all crazy & spooked.

ANNIE-SHARON

I jus' thought maybe/ if I could ride like Mama & make Daddy real proud/ maybe/ well/ maybe he might like us better.

LUCIE-MARIE

Not us/ you/ Daddy like me fine/ it's that Cassie woman what I'm worried 'bout. . .jus' cuz she races don't make her no match fo' Mama.

ANNIE-SHARON

Mama's dead/ cain't be no match for her now or no other time jus' us's/ we the onliest ones. . .

LUCIE-MARIE

That's what I mean/ See, it's only Mama could tell us all we need to know / so we could/ oh be beautiful/ you know like Linda Beauville or Tootsie Woo/ they Mama's do they hair up wit them perms 'n' stuff/ put that no chippin' polish on they nails/ fringes on they rodeo git-ups/ ya know make pies 'n' do for when they entertain/ that's what they Mama's do/ that's what our Mama wd be doin' too/.

ANNIE-SHARON

Well, we ain't got one.

(*Throws belt across the room*.)

LUCIE-MARIE

You cain't do that/ Look whatchu did wit Mama's prize.

(*Runs to pick up the belt*.)

ANNIE-SHARON

It ain't nothin' but a damned piece of raw hide wit some silver on it/ that ain't yo' Mama, fool/ that a symbol/ that's how she died/ that's how come she died/ broncbustin'/ everybody in the world knows cain't no woman in her right mind be no bronc-buster/ oh no/ but not your growed up Mama/ she gonna show the world what all she could do/ she the virgin mary in a cowboy hat/ cain't no wild thing buck/ she dead/ trampled for her living/ trampled to death like so much hog feed/ tryin' to prove she more powerful than a STALLIONNN/ that's yo' precious Mama/ who's gonna tell ya how to be a woman/ tell you whatchu need to know/ like she could grow nails on a cowgirl's hands/ all you need to know/ that's some dream ya got/.

LUCIE-MARIE

Don'tchu talk like that/ you take all them things back/ heifer.

(*Lunges at her sister*.)

Mama was wonderful/ don'tchu say no mo' mean things bout my mother.

ANNIE-SHARON

I ain't said nothin' but you ain't got one/ you ain't got no mother more 'n' I do/ she cared mo' bout them damn animals than us.

LUCIE-MARIE

STOP IT! I'm tellin' you/ She was a great broncbuster. . .

ANNIE-SHARON

Daddy say bronc-bustin' ain't ladylike.

LUCIE-MARIE

What he know bout it? He a big ol' man.

ANNIE-SHARON

You think she knew somethin' bout it? Huh?

(*Fighting over belt intensely*.)

LUCIE-MARIE

Don't say nothin' else bout Mommy/ Don't/ don't.

(*Starts crying & shoving*.)

ANNIE-SHARON

Heah. That's whatchu got from "Mommy."

(*Throws belt to* LUCIE-MARIE.)

LUCIE-MARIE

You don't know nothin'/ ya don' know how to act/ act like a hoodlum & don't hold nothin' dear.

(*Puts belt around herself & goes over to the trophies & other belts on the wall*.)

I remember when she won this heah one in Navasota/ at the All Women's Rodeo/ Come in at 14˙3 barrel racing/ some night's she tied down that calf for second place/ after that Agnes Morales/ Look/ look, ain't this pretty?/ don't chu remember???

ANNIE-SHARON

YOU AIN'T GOT NO SENSE? YOU FULLY ACTUALDUMB? Cain't figure out where babies come from or that yo' Mama was a steel doggin' damn fool/ dyin' on us. . .

LUCIE-MARIE

You hush up/ My mama rides wit me/ jus' like she did when she'd sing to me in the night in the trailer/ "you're jus' a cowgirl's baby/ ridin' the Sandman's prairie."

ANNIE-SHARON

Stop/ Stop/ I tol' you I don' wanna heah nothin' bout Mama/ Nothin'.

(*Snatches belt as* TIE-DOWN BROWN *enters ominously*.)

She dead/ I'm tellin' you/

(*Sees* TIE-DOWN.)

Oh, Daddy. . .

TIE-DOWN BROWN

What's that in yo' hands?

(*Takes belt & slaps her*.)

I tol' you to let what's past be past/ If I said it once I said it ten hundred times/ & today of all days.

ANNIE-SHARON

But Daddy, we was jus' lookin'.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Ya don' look wit your hands.

LUCIE-MARIE

Daddy, please, just this one time/ tell us somethin' bout Mama.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

She died from bronco-bustin'/ tryin' to be more a man than a man/ that's all/ now put these things back/ & stop all this noise/ of all the damned days to ride.

LUCIE-MARIE

Daddy/ Please listen to me/ Daddy, did you love her? What was she like when she acted like a girl?/ Daddy/ not when she acted like a boy/ what was she like? Daddy, I've gotta know somethin' sides she died/ Daddy, did you think she was pretty?/ you usedta say I looked like her/ Do you think I'm pretty/ Daddy?/ please/ please tell me.

ANNIE-SHARON

Leave him alone Lucie/ Leave everybody alone/ ya heah.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Yeah/ listen to yo' sister/ What's in the past is in the past.

LUCIE-MARIE

But I look like her & I ain't in the past/ Daddy/ Please Daddy/ I wanna be just like her/ & oh I don' know. . .

ANNIE-SHARON

Lucie/ why are you talkin' all this mess? Cain't you see Daddy ain't up to this/ why you gonna put us through all this heah?

LUCIE-MARIE

You shut up/ I'm talkin' to my father.

ANNIE-SHARON

And he ain't mine too/ I ain't got no mama either/ but you gonna ruin my daddy's life talkin' 'bout how you

gonna be jus' like her/ look what she did to Daddy/ he cain't hardly talk 'bout nothin' when somethin' brings her to mind/ you wanna take my Daddy 'way too/ you actual mo' dumb than I thought you was.

LUCIE-MARIE

I ain't dumb/ I jus' wanna heah some mo' 'bout Mommy/ I gotta right/ I'm her girl.

ANNIE-SHARON

And whatchu think I am, some kinda shegoat?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Lucie-Marie/ Annie-Sharon/ Hush all this quarrelin'/ Stop now. I guess/ I ain't been handlin' this like I oughtta.

(*Takes two belts from the wall. Wraps one around each child*.)

See, yo' mama & me/ Well/ we was jus' kids/ she was the prettiest li'l ol' thing/ look jus' like you.

LUCIE-MARIE

See/ I tol' ya/ I look jus' like her.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Most times in the summer/ when the sun wd getta settin'/ wild-like/ all red & orange wit magnolias & cypress reachin' up thru them clouds that be hangin' from the sky like cotton candy 'n' the grass smellin' ripe like/ times like that/ yo' mama 'n' me/ we'd jump on Masaya/ that's that mare Twanda set so much store by/ we'd climb up on Masaya/ & walk her thru them woods past the corral/ walk her real slow/ 'til we cd hear most everythin' there was to hear/ & then she/ Twanda wd sing/ to me/ some ol' somethin' she made up in her head/ jus' sing to me. . .then alla sudden she'd kick up, & off we went duckin' branches/ jumpin' fences/ damn fool gal/ 'most run us into the swamp/ Lawd, I'll never forget/ fearin' Masaya was fallin'/ I was fallin'/ Twanda was leanin' here & then thisaway/ & here come the mud up my pants legs & I cdn't tell if yo' mama was under the horse or down in there smotherin' to death in the mud/ good jesus, that woman didn't have no kinda sense/ justa singin'/ & here we goin' right down offa this animal into the center of the earth/ humph/ that was somethin'/ I'm tellin' ya/ her cheekbones come way up like Cherokees/ real high & glowin' brown/ but but, ain't no way to get 'round it. . .Both of ya favor her/ from time to time/ always on this day. . .

ANNIE-SHARON

How Daddy?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Right there by yo' eyes/ I reckon/ Annie/ but Lucie-Marie's carryin' her mother's mouth. . .yep/ y'all is Twanda's daughters/ that's for sho'/ Daddy's roughtough ridin' cutiepies/ right?

LUCIE-MARIE

Was she smart too/ Daddy?

ANNIE-SHARON

You know my mama wasn't dumb like you.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Smart as a whip ‘fore she left school/ then she jus’ set her mind on them horses & y'all. . .you know the rest.

LUCIE-MARIE

But Daddy, she was a champion/ Twanda Rochelle Johnson/ Southwestern Rodeo Association All Star/ three years in a row.

ANNIE-SHARON

And she wasn't but 28 when. . .

TIE-DOWN BROWN

No more talk now/ y'all get yourselves ready/ Cassie's comin' over.

ANNIE-SHARON & LUCIE-MARIE

Cassie?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Yeah/ it'll be good to have a woman 'round heah.

LUCIE-MARIE

But I thought we were goin' to the rodeo at the Diamond-L/ & you don' never bring no woman 'round heah.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

We is.

ANNIE-SHARON

She goin'?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

She is.

(ANNIE-SHARON *and* LUCIE-MARIE *look at each other and then at their father. They finger their buckles and look back at each other and in unison say*:)

Oh.

LUCIE-MARIE

She ridin' wit' us?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Yep.

ANNIE-SHARON

Like Mama?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Ain't nobody like yo' mama. . .but we gotta keep livin' is all.

(ANNIE-SHARON *goes over to the window*. TDB *exits*.)

LUCIE-MARIE

Nobody/ nobody ever gone be like Mama/ right Annie? Annie/ you hear me? Ain't no woman comin' in heah. . .this heah is our house. . .right Annie? Annie-Sharon/ you hear me?

(*Lights*.)

Scene 2

(CASSIE *and* TDB *are coming up off the kitchen table. They are both giggling and fixing their pants*. TIE-DOWN *gets a couple of beers and a chaser of Jack Daniels*. CASSIE *sprawls across the chair nearest the table*.)

CASSIE

Now, Mistah Tie-down Brown/ that's just 'bout a good 'nough time as I've had myself lately/ I 'most ready to say we gotta do that on a mo' frequent basis/ but do ya think we could somehow or othah set a quilt or a towel even on that table/ all that rockin' on linoleum bothers my behind/ really it do.

(CASSIE *rubs her backside*. TIE-DOWN *crosses over to her and gives her a swift whack on it*.)

TIE-DOWN BROWN

I don' rightly see as how yo' tough-assed behind could be havin' no problems/ seein' as how ya spend most of yo' few sane moments ridin' wild horses/

CASSIE

Yeah, but I wasn't thinkin' you was one 'em/ damn fool.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Who you callin' fool?

CASSIE

Yo' sweet black ass/ that's who. 'Sides, I always had my eyes on you/ always/ even when me & Twanda was tight/ I jus' kept on thinkin'/ now I want me a man like that one/ one like that Tie-down Brown/ I feel/ well/ hell, I feel strange sometimes on accounta/ I'm bein' wit' you 'n' she bein' done passed/ well/ maybe I jus' done know 'xactly what to do wit' myself/ or wit' you/ ol' wild man/ come on, give me some mo' sugar.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

What happened wit' Twanda couldn't nobody stop it/ not you or me/ & she wasn't the kinda gal what had a

stinginess to her/ I bet my life if I was gonna take up wit' a woman/ she'd want it to be you/

CASSIE

Done be lyin' to me, ya hear me/ done be talkin' all out yo' senses cuz ya got a li'l bit & ya feelin' like a new man or somethin'/ I honestly cain't remember no time when ya talked 'bout Twanda wit'out raisin' hell or gettin' them jaws so tight I thought I haveta call the vet/ to pry yo' mouth open.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Well/ it's the girls/ ya know they was talkin' to me this mornin' & sayin' they gotta right to know some mo' 'bout Twanda/ & I guess/ I come to decide they right/ she half a whatever they is/ half a me & half a her/ it's just. . .damn, ya know sometimes I jus' got this feelin' that I done understand 'em/ like I cain't talk to 'em/ less I carry a razor strap wit' me/ or make sho' I gotta hair brush stickin' out my back pocket/

CASSIE

One thing for sho', you done haveta beat no sense inta no chile/ ever/ I swear 'fo' God/ beatin' on a chile ain't never done nothin' but make 'em truly unruly/ yes, Jesus/ them what's 'bused & scorned gonna be partners wit' the devil his own self/ watch now/ see if I ain't tellin' you true.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

I like that/what you sayin'/ makes sense & reminds me how good you was feelin' to me/ jus' a li'l while back/ you got some sho' nough snappin' turtle. . .

CASSIE

Forget whatchu 'bout to say, niggah & tell me what you thin 'bout the rodeo today.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Damn it, Cassie/ I done need to talk 'bout no rodeo now/ I need to be talkin' to yo' fine, sassy, liver-lipped self/

CASSIE

'bout what?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

'bout us/ & 'bout them girls 'n' you/ cuz you the onliest woman I know who growed up wit'out a mama.

CASSIE

That's a lie/ I did have a mama/ she jus' drank a li'l much is all/ she wasn't no invalid or no moron or nothin'/ jus' she couldn't seem to hold things together sometimes/ but done you go 'round sayin' I didn't have no mama/

TIE-DOWN BROWN

I didn't 'xactly mean that/honey/ all what I was gettin' at is/ cuz of yo' situation & my situation/ you might could help me wit' Lucie-Marie & Annie-Sharon/ I'm jus' not doin' right/ something I'm doin' jus' ain't right. . .

CASSIE

Well, there ain't no need to rush nothin'/ ya hear. I'ma be here/ I ain't goin' nowhere from you/ least not fo' long.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Lessen there's a rodeo comin' up in Oklahoma, right?

CASSIE

Yeah/ let's talk 'bout that/ I love me some rodeo talk/ & I love me some of this Tie-down Brown/ but you gonna haveta get some place softer. . .

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Awright/ but I done tol'you ya gotta nice, soft behind up under them jeans.

CASSIE

We done had 'nough love talk/ now talk to me 'bout the rodeo/ I love me some cowboys/ oh Lawd, give me a blue black cowboy & I swear I'll give it up in the. . .

TIE-DOWN BROWN

On the table.

CASSIE

The rodeo, niggah/ not yo' pleasure.

Scene 3

(*In the kitchen with a fireplace that also serves as a living room. Country & western music is on the radio*. TDB *and* CASSIE *are drinking beer and talking. He's cleaning up dishes and such*.)

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Yeah-you/ Amos sho' got his tail whipped by that bull.

CASSIE

#17/ that one was one mean-assed crittur.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Thought all them cowboys from Alvin was gonna get they asses dragged 'round this heah day.

CASSIE

All 'ceptin you.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

That's right/ that ain't bad/ two first place & one second for a total of $233/ that ain't bad for a high school

drop-out from the great state of Texas/ right/ whatchu say to that?

CASSIE

Well/ I didn't do so bad my damn self/ ya know.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Yeah/ but they's better ways for a gal to earn her money.

CASSIE

I don' do it for money.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

How long that gonna last?

CASSIE

Look who's talkin'/ how long is it gonna last yo' black ass?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Ain't the same! I got two near full-growed girls/ I'm all settled down/ you got two colts & a stallion/what kinda family ya call that?

CASSIE

Stay outta my business/ boy/ I hadta finish school, & them horses is mine/ I bought 'em & paid for 'em wit' my own money, & right now that's plenty for me/ jus' wait 'til I qualify for the Regional/ Lawd/ I'ma be hot to trot/ first place/ calf-roping/ barrels/bronc-bustin'/steel-doggin'. . .

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Whatchu sayin'?

CASSIE

Calf-roping/ barrels/bronc-bustin'/ steel-doggin'. I'ma do it all.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Good Jesus/ how do I do it?

CASSIE

Do what?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

End up wit' gals what got they minds on foolishness.

CASSIE

Who you callin' foolish?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Look/looky-heah/ I don' mean to say nothin' 'bout you bein' simple-minded/ it's jus' you know how it was wit' Twanda/ like she could win & win/ but it wasn't never 'nough for her/ & she kept on 'til she damn near/ hell, she kep' on 'til she killt herself/now here you is talkin' 'bout steel-doggin'/ shit/ didn't you see them bulls tear inta these boys from Longview/ hell, they bigger 'n' I am/ what in the name of Christ is you gonna do humpin' one of them?/ ya wanna end up dead too?

CASSIE

No/ I don' think you was tryin' to tell me I'm some kinda fool/ but/ ya gotta understand/ I ain't never gointa college/ I ain't gonna be no vet or a doctor or a nurse even/ shit/ I probably couldn't even make it as a administrative assistants' assistant/ but I can ride/ & I wanna be the best I can/ I ain't got much left as a woman/you right/ I ain't got mucha family/ do you think that means I ain't 's'posed to want nothin' mo' out my life?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

You bein' headstrong/ willful/ jus' like she was/ that's how she left me wit' them two girls/

CASSIE

Who you gonna leave 'em wit'?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Don' talk like that/ you got no call to talk like that/ ya might mark me or somethin'

(*Goes over to photograph of Twanda*.)

CASSIE

Jus' what is yo' problem, Tie-down? You don' wanna woman good as you/ smart as you/ brave as you? Whatchu gonna do wit' them girls, huh? Give 'em some make-up & mo' free time so they can get pregnant & drop outta school like Twanda had to?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

That's what gals is s'poses to do/ have babies & keep a good house/ & you gettin' close to bein' outta your place/ my/ girls ain't none of yo' concern/ & as a matter of fact, fo' yo' information/ Twanda didn't like school no how/ she liked me. . .

CASSIE

And where did that git her?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Whatchu mean? You sayin' I'm the cause of Twanda's bein' pullt over a whole rodeo arena cuz she liked me & my kids/ she tried to git herself killt/ you crazy. . .

CASSIE

That ain't what I mean/ & you know it/ I mean ya didn't leave much else fo' her to do wit' her life/ nothin' but you & the kids/ & that jus' wasn't enough/ at least at the rodeo she was important/ she had somethin' to be proud of/ somethin' she did on her own/ wit'out havin' to give yo' ass some credit/

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Hey! You ain't got chick nor child! So you busy talkin' 'bout somethin' you got no knowledge of/ no knowledge.

CASSIE

Oh yeah? You know what yo' girls were busy doin' today over to the Diamond-L?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Sho' I know/ they was gettin' them trophies for ropin' & runnin' barrels.

CASSIE

That may be some of what all they did/ but that ain't all.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Would you talk sense & quit bein' so damned cute?

CASSIE

Whatchu gotta say 'bout horses' dicks?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Hell/I ain't got nothin' to say 'bout no damn horse dick.

CASSIE

I thought I heard 'em say somethin' like "Goddamn" & "Wow."

TIE-DOWN BROWN

So what that s'posed to mean? If you was 10 or even 13/ wouldn't a big ol' horse dick make you say somethin', or you always been tight-mouthed & seen it all.

CASSIE

Oh Tie-down/ one of these days you gonna dig a hole so big all of yo' big head gonna fit in it/ cain't you see they growin' up on you/ man/ you actin' like they tottlin' colts, & I'm sayin' you got some wild-assed fillies on yo' hands/ if you ask me.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

I ain't askin'.

(*There's giggling and noise at the door/ some shuffling sounds*. TDB *and* CASSIE *look askance at the door*. TDB *peeks over the kitchen sink at the girls outside*.)

ANNIE-SHARON

You got the key?

(*Inebriated*.)

LUCIE-MARIE

Naw/ you got the key upside down.

ANNIE-SHARON

You sho' the key don' go thisaway?

LUCIE-MARIE

It ain't never gointa go in there upside down 'less you stand on yo' head & open the door wit' your teeth.

ANNIE-SHARON

Why I gotta open the door wit' my teeth jus' cuz I'ma be upside down?

LUCIE-MARIE

I don't know.

(TDB *opens door abruptly*.)

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Well/ I done opened the door fo' both of y'all.

(*Girls tumble through the door on top of each other*.)

CASSIE

Tie-down, they drunk!

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Ya know, I've jus' 'bout had it wit' you/ my girls ain't drunk/ I myself sat right in this heah kitchen & taught 'em how to drink/ they jus' been celebratin'/ shit.

ANNIE-SHARON

Oh/ Daddy, did you see what Diamond-back gave me?

(*She pulls out a half gallon of malt liquor*.)

LUCIE-MARIE

He say it 'most like champagne.

CASSIE

You girls take those stink clothes off & git in the tub/ & git that mess off yo' faces. . .

ANNIE-SHARON

You ain't my mama/ I don' have to do did-dlysquat you say. . .

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Watch it girl.

LUCIE-MARIE

Oh Daddy, can we have one mo' li'l drink & a dance wit' you?/ let's do the Texas two-step or. . .

ANNIE-SHARON

I wanna "funkifize"/ I wanna "funkifize."

TIE-DOWN BROWN

C'mon, we gonna do the cotton-eyed joe/

(*The girls turn on the record player and start dancing. They are terribly drunk. While the music is playing, they get very sloppy about their movement. As the music gets faster*, ANNIE-SHARON *runs out, apparently nauseous*. TDB *stops dancing and stops the music*. LUCIE-MARIE *keeps dancing, no matter there is no more music*.)

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Annie/ whatsa matter witchu?

CASSIE

What in the hell you think?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Aw hell, she ain't sick/ why she's like her mama/ a hard-drinkin'/ hard-ridin' woman. . .

LUCIE-MARIE

Daddy/ why you say Mama don' ride wit' me?

(*She twirls around and gets dizzy*.)

CASSIE

Heah/ chile sit down 'fore you fall on yo' face. . .

(ANNIE-SHARON *enters*.)

ANNIE-SHARON

Daddy, Daddy, I'm bleedin'. . .

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Oh Lawd/ how come ya cain't race horses wit'out cuttin' yo'self all up?/ when you went 'round them barrels didn't you lift yo' leg so they wdn't crash that rim/ you gotta know by now/ that metal'll cut thru any kind of leather/

ANNIE-SHARON

I don't think it's that Daddy.

(CASSIE *is talking quietly to* LUCIE-MARIE, *soothing her*.)

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Aw darlin', yo' time's come/ that's what it must be.

ANNIE-SHARON

Daddy, my time come two years ago.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Well, hell, whatchu tryin' to say?

(*Pause*.)

Annie-Sharon, you way outta line if you tellin' me what I think you tellin' me.

(ANNIE-SHARON *takes two steps back*.)

ANNIE-SHARON

Oh Daddy/ he/ well/ we, Diamond-back/ you know Diamondback/ right?/ well you know what a good friend he is, & he tol' me all kinds of things like/ well Daddy, he said nothin' would happen/ huh, uhm/ he said fine/ well I'd feel so good/ & it had to happen some time/ & we was so happy 'bout winnin'/ ya know Diamondback/ he the champion steel dogger/ junior division/ jus' like you was Daddy/ I liked it/ I mean/ I love Diamondback/ don'tchu Daddy?/ he's a great cowboy/ Daddy jus' like you was/ & wit' me & him together we cd both be champions/ right Daddy?

(ANNIE-SHARON *gets more nervous as she speaks*. CASSIE *comes over to her and holds her*.)

Daddy/ it's you know/ important to be special to somebody/ I jus' wanted to be special on my own/

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Why is this happenin' to me? First Twanda jumps up & gets pregnant.

CASSIE

Oh that's what happened.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Damn it! This ain't no time to be funny.

CASSIE

What'd you expect? Ya git 'em all confused drinkin', dancin'/ downplayin' they talents/ like all it takes to be a woman is a fast dance, some lipstick & a man. Look at this chile/ it's awright Annie. You're gonna be okay/ whatchu did was real special/ I wantchu to go clean yo'self up/ & clear yo' head some. . .

ANNIE-SHARON

Why you bein' so nice to me?

CASSIE

I ain't got no reason not to be nice/ 'sides I was a girl way long 'fore I was a woman/ you jus' remindin' me of some things I'd wisht happened to me once/ & some things I wish had never happened.

ANNIE-SHARON

What thing ya wisht never happened?

CASSIE

We'll talk jus' me & you/ later awright/ now I jus' want you to relax yo'self/ git in the shower/ & rest. You've had a big ol' day/ winnin' all them prizes at the Diamond-L˙

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Yeah & some young ass fool is walkin' 'round wit' everything she done give away.

ANNIE-SHARON

You mad/ Daddy?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Jesus/ whatchu think? Wait one muthafuckin' minute/ Lucie-Marie/ Lucie-Marie/ what was you doin' while yo' sister was off/ off wit' Diamondback?

LUCIE-MARIE

Who/ me?/

(TDB *nods his head*.)

Me & Lincoln Maceo went out to the Triple-R-Ranch to. . .ah. . .

(*She looks all around*.)

Annie-Sharon/ what should I say. . .?

(TDB *gets exasperated and moves toward* LUCIE-MARIE.)

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Annie don' even know what's she's doin'/ she sho' cain't he'p you now/ cain't he'p herself none either.

CASSIE

Let the chile talk.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

C'mon Lucie-Marie/ what were you & Lincoln Maceo doin' at the Triple R?

LUCIE-MARIE

We was breakin' horses with some of the guys from Bellville.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Growed men from Bellville?

LUCIE-MARIE

Yeah. Ya know the Saginaw brothers, Rufus Sanderson & Henry Watson/ them guys.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Lawd I need me a drink/ a beer/ Jesus. This un goes off rollin' in the hay somewhere & this un is jumpin' all on top of some wild-assed horses/ likedta break her fool neck/ Good Jesus/ what'd I do? I done right by you/ ain't I Lucie-Marie/ Annie-Sharon/ ain'tchu got clothes/ saddles/ horses/ them jeans wit' straight legs/ jeans wit' all puffed out legs/ alligator boots/ new ropin' gear/ real gold jewelry?/ not everythin'/ but I tried to do right by y'all/ take y'all out/ show ya a good time/ learnt yo' prayers/ ever since yo' mama died. . .oh hell.

CASSIE

My God/ boy/ cain't ya see/ if you cain't even talk 'bout Twanda passin'/ these girls gonna push & push 'til you see her in them/ a hard-drinkin'/ hard-ridin' woman/ 'cordin' to you.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

That's not all she was/ Twanda was a whole lot more 'n' that.

LUCIE-MARIE

More 'n' me/ Daddy?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Mo' what than you?

LUCIE-MARIE

More woman than me.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Aw/ girl you still playin' wit' dolls.

CASSIE

You gonna be jus' as much a woman as yo' mama was, Lucie-Marie/ in time/ it don' all come at once/ is all.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Yeah/ I tol' ya how much ya favored.

ANNIE-SHARON

And me Daddy/ what about me?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

What about yo' fast behind?

ANNIE-SHARON

Am I ever gonna be a lady? I mean. . .now?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

I'ma haveta think on that/ after whatchu done gone & did to yo'self/ Lawd/ give some strength/ these gals is tearin' me up heah.

CASSIE

You a champion, right?

ANNIE-SHARON

Yes, M'am/ got first place twice runnin' barrels.

CASSIE

Seems to me you racin' to be a lady in the wrong arena these days/ keep hold to them horses/ Diamondback & all the other young bucks 'round heah can wait/ ‘specially them gettin’ grooves offa hard-drinkin', hard-ridin' gals/ they can wait.

ANNIE-SHARON

Wait/ Cassie?

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Hell yes/ wait.

CASSIE

Go on 'n' say whatchu mean, Tie-down.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

I mean, keep them legs closed.

LUCIE-MARIE

Daddy/ I cain't bronc-bust wit' my legs closed.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Cain't get pregnant neither.

CASSIE

Yes/ you can/ you don' know half of what comes out-ta yo' mouth.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Well how am Is'posed to talk to two girls 'bout/ this woman business/ all this mess. . .

CASSIE

It don' start out mess/ it don' get to be mess 'til some ol' young boy gits to messin' wit' it/ 'fore a girl gits to reachin' fo' woman before she can be one/ before it's meant/ go on to bed, now, girls.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Yeah/ get on outta heah/ we gonna talk fo' sho' tomorrow/ me & you/ both y'all.

(ANNIE-SHARON *and* LUCIE-MARIE *gather their things and kiss their father good night*.)

ANNIE-SHARON

Night, Daddy.

LUCIE-MARIE

Nighty night, Daddy.

(ANNIE-SHARON *and* LUCIE-MARIE *exit to the upstairs bedroom*. TDB *gets another beer. He's been drinking them all night*.)

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Don't look at me like that Cassie/ this sure has been a helluva night.

CASSIE

Yeah.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

I been tryin' to be a good father.

CASSIE

I do believe that's whatchu been tryin'.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Whatchu think I oughtta do now?

CASSIE

Let 'em be girls/ not all growed up before their time/ I remember I cain't tell ya how clearly/ I remember/ people scarin' me all the time/ like growin' up for a girl/ was a trep-eda-tious thang/ I ain't foolin' neither/ why I thought fo' sho' that if some ol' boy looked at me crossedways/ I had musta sinned or somethin' the same as a sin/ yeah/ it takes a heap of courage to do what them girls gotta do/

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Courage?

CASSIE

Uh huhmn. Makin' love for the first time/ breakin' wild horses. . .

(*She goes to the stereo and puts on a slow drag*.)

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Are you serious?

CASSIE

I'm all grown-up, Tie-down, I know what I'm doin'/ & I do it well/ cuz I carry my own protection/ ya see/ & that's one thing I'm goin' to pass on to those young rascals of yours/ men ain't the only ones 'round could be carryin' they own protection/ & still be good/ you know what I mean/ still be a real good ol' girl.

(*They begin to slow dance. Lights fade*.)

TIE-DOWN BROWN

But don'tchu think I need to tear the hides off them gals?/ look at what they done/ disobey/ act a fool/ act a tramp/ disgracin' my name/ oh Jesus/ I gotta mind to go up there right now & beat the living daylights out them wenches/

CASSIE

Now Tie-down/ calm down.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

Whatchu mean "calm down?"/ didn't you hear that heifer talkin' 'bout "I liked it?"

CASSIE

That ain't unusual/ most folks do like "it"/ & if ya don't mind/ I'd like a li'l mo' of "it"/ if ya can keep yo' pride from worryin' them girls to death.

TIE-DOWN BROWN

You ain't got no mo' sense than they do/ shit/ if they was yours you wdn't be so damn easy on 'em/ "I liked it."

(TIE-DOWN *breaks away from* CASSIE *to go upstairs*. CASSIE *stops him*.)

CASSIE

Niggah/ I ain't got all night/ & right this minute that kitchen table don't look half so bad as I was thinkin'/ c'mon/ I'll talk to them gals/ but right heah 'n' now/ you gotta woman on yo' hands/ Lawd you a sweet niggah/ my sweet black-eye pea/ we got time/ believe me we got plenty time/

(*Lights*.)

Scene 4

(*Girls are in their pajamas in their bedroom*. LUCIE-MARIE *is in the bed with a huge rag doll*.)

LUCIE-MARIE

My head hurts/ Annie/ does yours?

ANNIE-SHARON

No.

LUCIE-MARIE

Well, me & Lorinda gonna go to sleep/ now/ c'mon to bed/ please/ Annie/ I don' like sleepin' by myself/ that's a girl/ Lorinda/ say yo' prayers/ c'mon Annie/ come to bed/ please.

ANNIE-SHARON

In a second/ ya know there's somethin' I wanna tell/ Mama so bad/ somethin' only she could tell me 'bout/

LUCIE-MARIE

You the one said Mama couldn't tell ya nothin'.

ANNIE-SHARON

I was wrong/ I'm tryin' to get Mama to talk to me. . .

(ANNIE-SHARON *is by the window*.)

She's out there somewhere/ I think if she whispered sometimes/ every once in a while/ I might could understand/ I wouldn't be so lonely/ I'd always have somebody to talk to/

LUCIE-MARIE

I'm heah/ me & Lorinda.

ANNIE-SHARON

But you don' know 'bout nothin'/ I ain't got much confidence in Lorinda either.

LUCIE-MARIE

Cassie does. . .

ANNIE-SHARON

Cassie does what?

LUCIE-MARIE

Know 'bout things.

ANNIE-SHARON

Maybe. But she's not my mama.

LUCIE-MARIE

She ain't yo' mama now, leastways not yet. . .

ANNIE-SHARON

Naw. Lucie/ Mama is out there somewhere/ always will be/ Mama are ya listenin' to me? I want ya to know me & I wantcha to hear me now/ I miss ya/ Mama/ I want ya to be wit' me/ be my friend/ Mama/ Mama please/ please talk to me/ Mama/ I love you.

(ANNIE-SHARON *goes to the wall with the buckles. Gets a couple down. Takes a hat and a trophy. Piles them onto the bed and on herself. Pulls covers back.*)

ANNIE-SHARON

I'm gonna be jus' like you/ Mama/ I wanna do it so/ be like you/ but I get scared Mama/ I get scared/ I'm so much a li'l bit of you.

(*She leans over to kiss* LUCIE-MARIE.)

I'ma be as good as you Mama/ jus' you wait & see/ I can ride the hell out some horses/ & I'm learnin' how to kiss/ no matter what all Daddy say.

(*Lights*.)